

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CARACA 07095 291623Z

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4998

INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA PRIORITY

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UNCLAS CARACAS 7095

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CO CU VE PFOR

SUBJECT: CUBA: PRESIDENT PEREZ AND PRESIDENT-ELECT LOPEZ
MICHELSEN COMMENTS FAVORABLY ON CASTRO SPEECH.

REF: CARACAS 7066

1. AT A JOINT PRESS CONFERENCE HELD DURING A BRIEF FOUR-HOUR VISIT OF COLOMBIAN PRESIDENT-ELECT LOPEZ MICHELSEN TO CARACAS JULY 27, PRESIDENT PEREZ RESPONDED TO QUESTIONS FROM THE PRESS REGARDING THE POSSIBILITY OF VENEZUELA REESTABLISHING DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH CUBA. THE FOLLOWING IS A TRANSLATION OF THE PRESIDENT'S REPLY AS REPORTED IN THE PRESS: QUOTE I WISH TO SAY THAT THE TEXT OF CUBAN PRIME MINISTER FIDEL CASTRO'S SPEECH, ON THE ANNIVERSARY OF HIS REVOLUTON, THE 26TH OF JULY, HAS GIVEN ME EXTRAORDINARY PLEASURE IN THAT FOR THE FIRST TIME WE HEAR FROM THE CUBAN GOVERNMENT CORDIAL WORDS IN RESPECT TO THE POSSIBLE REESTABLISHMENT OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES, INDICATING THAT THIS IS A DESIRE OF THE CUBAN PEOPLE. I WISH TO RECEIVE THIS DECLARATION WITH SYMPATHY AND TO PRESENT IT TO THE VENEZUELAN PEOPLE AS AN EXAMPLE OF HOW THERE IS CLEARLY OPEN TO US A PERSPECTIVE TO THE REEESTABLISHMENT OF RELATIONS. END QUOTE.

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PAGE 02 CARACA 07095 291623Z

2. IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION FROM THE PRESS AS TO WHETHER THIS IMPLIED THAT DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WOULD SOON BE REESTABLISHED, THE PRESIDENT REPORTEDLY REPLIED: QUOTE VENEZUELA HAS INTER-AMERICAN OBLIGATIONS WITHIN THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES. THUS, WE ARE GOING TO TRANSLATE THIS DESIRE EXPRESSED BY THE CUBAN GOVERNMENT INTO PROMPT DIPLOMAIC ACTION TO UNDERTAKE AN AGREEMENT AMONG THOSE COUNTRIES IN OUR AREA WITH THE OBJECTIVE OF ENDING THE MEASURES TAKEN IN REGARD TO CUBA SO THAT EVERY COUNTRY WILL BE FREE TO ESTBLISH DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITHOUT BREAKING INTER-AMERICAN AGREEMENT. END QUOTE.

3. IN RESPONSE TO A FURTHER PRESS QUESTION AS TO TWETHER VENEZUELA WILL TAKE THE INITIATIVE IN THIS REGARD, PRESIDENT PEREZ RESPONDED: QUOTE CUBA TOOK THE INITIATIVE IN ITS DECLARATION OF JULY 26 AND IT NOW IS UP TO THE LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES TO REACH AN AGREEMENT. I BELIEVE THAT THERE IS ENOUGH TIME REMAINING IN THE YEAR 1974 TO RESOLVE THE SITUATION. EDN QUOTE.

4. PRESIDENT-ELECT LOPEZ MICHELSEN IS REPORTED TO HAVE SAID: QUOTE IN RESPECT TO RELATONS WITH CUBA, I STATED IN MY ELECTROAL CAMPAIGN THAT I WOULD NOT TAKE A POSITION IN THE ABSTRACT, BUT ON THE BASIS ON EXISTING CONDITIONS WHEN I TOOK OFFICE. THERE ARE, NEVERTHELESS TWO IMPORTANT FACTS: THE AGREEMENT ON AIR PIRACY SIGNED BETWEEN COLOMBIA AND CUBA., AND THE DECLARATION WHICH THE CUBAN PRIME MINISTER FIDEL CASTRO MADE ON JULY 26 REFERRING TO THE POSSIBILITY OF REESTABLISHING RELATIONS WITH VENEZUELA. I BELIEVE THE SAME SPIRIT EXISTS WITH REGARD TO COLOMBIA. UNQUOTE. MCCLINTOCK

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